

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 FCC-01 IO-13 SCS-03 SCA-01
DHA-02 IGA-02 /084 W
-----190321Z 108580 /63
R 181242Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3155

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1626

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ET, PINS
SUBJ: RADIO VOICE OF GOSPEL (RVOG) NATIONALIZED

REF: STATE 56632

1. CHARGE DISCUSSED RVOG SITUATION MARCH 16 WITH DR. CARL MAO, PRESIDENT, LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, BASED IN GENEVA. MAO SAID MAJOR PURPOSE WEE'S CALL ON AF/E (REFTEL) WAS BECAUSE OF CONCERN THAT HE WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN ENTERING ETHIOPIA GIVEN PRESENT CONDITIONS HERE. HE DID NOT.

2. MAO SAID PRIMARY PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS FACT FINDING. HE HAD NOT SEEN AND PROBABLY WOULD NOT SEE SENIOR ETHIOPIANS RE RVOG PROBLEM. HE WAS SATISFIED THAT TAKEOVER HAD GONE WITHOUT INCIDENT AND THAT STAFF, BOTH ETHIOPIAN AND FOREIGN, WERE SAFE AND ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT FREELY. ETHIOPIAN STAFF HAD BEEN NATIONALIZED ALONG WITH STATION ITSELF, BUT MAO FELT THAT MANY WOULD EITHER NOT WISH STAY OR WOULD BE TERMINATED BY EPMG IN WHICH CASE LUTHERAN CHURCH HERE WOULD TRY TO LOOK AFTER THAM. EXPATRIATES HAD BEEN GIVEN UNDERSTAND THEY CAN LEAVE COUNTRY AND HE BELIEVED MOST WOULD DO SO. EPMG HAD REQUESTED SOME TECHNICIANS TO REMAIN ON UNTIL END OF MARCH AND THOSE ASKED HAD AGREED DO SO PROVIDED THEY WERE NOT ASKED BECOME INVOLVED IN PROGRAM CONTENT.
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NEW ETHIOPIAN MANAGER HAD APPEARED MORNING OF TAKEOVER, BUT WHILE PLEASANT, CLEARLY DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF HIM.

3. MAO TOLD CHARGE IN CONFIDENCE THAT RVOG'S ACCOUNT HAD BEEN BLOCKED, BUT THAT EPMG TIMING HAD BEEN BAD. LUTHERANS WERE ON POINT OF TRANSFERRING QUARTER OF MILLION DOLLARS TO ACCOUNT, BUT ACTUAL STATUS WAS BIRR 50 THOUSAND OVERDRAFT. TIMING ALSO BAD IN

THAT SCARCELY TWO WEEKS BEFORE, EPMG HAD REQUESTED ASSISTANCE FROM LUTHERANS (NOT RVOG) OF UP TO DOLS 2 MILLION. MAO ROUGHLY ESTIMATED VALUE OF NATIONALIZED EQUIPMENT AT AROUND DOLS 13 MILLION.

4. MAO DID NOT REQUEST ANY ASSISTANCE AT THIS TIME ALTHOUGH CHARGE VOLUNTEERED TRY TO BE HELPFUL IF THERE SEEMED BE SOMETHING WE MIGHT USEFULLY DO. MAO MADE IT CLEAR LUTHERANS WILL EVENTUALLY SEEK COMPENSATION BUT FOR TIME BEING UNTIL THEY SURE EXPATRIATES HAVE NO PROBLEMS, THEY DO NOT WISH ROCK BOAT. HE THOUGHT ANY REQUEST FOR HELP WOULD IN ANY CASE ORIGINATE WITH NATIONAL LUTHERAN ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTLY TO THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS. HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE AT LEAST WANTS BE CAREFUL HOW HIS ORGANIZATION PROCEEDS LEST ANYTHING THEY DO JEOPARDIZES OTHER SUBSTANTIAL LUTHERAN INTERESTS IN ETHIOPIA.

5. COMMENT: MAO AND SWEDISH EVOG DIRECTOR WERE FAIRLY RELAXED IN DISCUSSING SITUATION, AND IT CLEAR FROM VARIOUS COMMENTS THAT WHILE ACTUAL TAKEOVER CAME SUDDENTLY, IT WAS NOT EXACTLY A GREAT SURPRISE. JUDGING FROM MAO'S COMMENTS, DEPT AT SOME LATER DATE MAY HEAR FURTHER FROM LUTHERANS IN STATES. WHILE AT THIS POINT WE ARE NOT SURE THAT THERE IS MUCH WE CAN DO TO BE HELPFUL HERE, WE SUGGEST THAT IF AND WHEN APPROACHED, DEPT INQUIRE INTO EXACTLY WHAT THE AMERICAN INTEREST IS. WE HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, NO IDEA OF STRUCTURE OF LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, NOR OF WHAT DIRECT AMERICAN INTERESTS THERE MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN RVOG. SINCE WE ARE NOT NOW BEING ASKED TO DO ANYTING HERE, WE WOULD PREFER LET MATTER ALONE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS WE ARE ASKED FOR HELP EITHER HERE OR IN WASHINGTON.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Sent Date: 18-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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